

Nafeesa sails her way to success

Hard-pressed into running the family-owned business, Nafeesa Moloobhoy, Managing Partner of A.S. Moloobhoy & Sons, sailed through all odds and successfully anchored herself as an entrepreneur to reckon with in the marine industry. Lack of a formal degree or diploma did not deter her to foray into a male bastion.

by Reshmi Chakravarthy



"It was a man's world but is no longer. More women will dive into the oceans of opportunity and prove their mettle," asserts Nafeesa Moloobhoy, who calls the shots at the century-old company.

Travelling down the memory lane, Moloobhoy recollects why she had to venture into the business. "My husband, Adil Moloobhoy, had to retire early due to ill health and I had no choice but to take over the company to ensure that it was business as usual at Moloobhoy's." Yes, you can feel the resolve behind the words. It was in 1960s that our company shifted focus from ship breaking and ship chandling to specialise in safety products for the marine industry, she recalls. Recently, the company has ventured into providing Type Specific ECDIS training for aspiring mariners.

"My husband inherited the company from his father. My children, are the fourth generation to handle the 1905-established ancestral business house," she says, with a proud grin on her face.

Under her able administration, Moloobhoy's successfully secured the all-India dealership of Furuno Inc., a Japanese electronics company whose main products are marine electronics, including radar systems, fish finders and navigational instruments. "It put us firmly in the navigation business and allied services," she informs. Last year, A.S. Moloobhoy's, after spending more than a century in Mazagaon, relocated to an eco-friendly office, Marathon Future-X in Lower Parel, Mumbai.

Her sheer determination and dedication reflects in placing the right value system at Moloobhoy's.

But that should not mean, Nafeesa is an all-business woman. The humble and thoroughly professional Nafeesa successfully juggles a demanding professional life with personal space. A homemaker at heart, she is happy that both these spheres overlap in her life as she mentors her two daughters, Ghazalah Moloobhoy and Tehzeeb Moloobhoy, recently married, in the trade.

True to her adventurous self, she has many plans chalked out for her company in the next five years. "I want our company to go public in the next five years and be the first marine service companies to be listed in the stock exchange." There is a proposal to expand internationally by opening a branch in Dubai, apart from starting a marine-related IT vertical by setting up BPO facilities to repair electronic shipboard equipment.

Plans are afoot to launch a state-of-the-art training centre for the offshore industry, offering Bosiet and Huet courses, apart from lifeboat management, certified by Opito, in collaboration with MTC who are pioneers in the field. The company also has a sizeable market share in the sale and supply of pyrotechnics.

Ask who inspires her the most and pat comes the reply, Chanda Kochhar, the MD and CEO of ICICI Bank, whom she knows personally and admires every facet of her personality. "Kochhar is not outstanding only in the professional front, she also is an affectionate mother and an homemaker. Above all, she looks petite. She is my muse," says Nafeesa.

A torchbearer to the world-class ship supplier company, Nafeesa's main focus is customer satisfaction and in the same breath, she also makes every employee feel they are working for their own family. The staff have their own guest house and enjoy going to picnics together. After a hectic schedule, Nafeesa too unwinds by seeing good movies, going for massages at spas, indulging in facials at salons.

Nafeesa aims to corporatise the trade and get due recognition for it, just like the film industry. We, at Maritime Gateway, wish success in all her endeavours and will sure be there to support her in the incredible journey. [mgy](#)